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Efforts of pro-government elements to recapture initiative in Guatemala's war of nerves (EMBTEL 903, June 5) were not entirely successful despite vigorous measures by government to control situation such as suspension of civil liberties. In surprising contrast with its usual self-assurance, Executive Committee of National Labor Confederation CGTG on June 11 issued statement "in full agreement with CNOG" saying that workers should fight within their respective parties against "panic and discouragement of certain vacillating elements influenced by enemy propaganda" and Communist Party PGT published manifesto June 12 stating intensive educational campaign was necessary to clear away poison of infamous and calumnious propaganda of reactionaries. At same time, existence of dangerous temper in countryside was indicated by Guardia civil announcement that effort arrest alleged leaders of insurrectionary band at El Durazno small town near Amatitlan had met with resistance from more than forty peasants who butchered two policemen with machetes and seriously wounded another. Unlike situation in January 1954 and April 1953 when arrests and tortures effectively dampened spirits of opposition, atmosphere remained one of expectancy, and tension, after relaxing somewhat last week, once again seemed on the rise.

Throughout week government intensified measures to tighten its control over strategic points. Government inspector was placed in Pan American communications center at Guatemala City airport to monitor all traffic. Gerald Catousse, known for his incendiary anti-British broadcasts beamed on Belize over government radio station TGW, was assigned to office of Tropical Radio to censor International Radio-Telephone conversations, and Tropical Radio was ordered to give government copies of messages between other Central American countries which transmit Guatemala. Censors were increasingly strict in editing copy of foreign press correspondents who nevertheless found ways of evading censors.

Attempted arrest of peasants near Amatitlan was part of government plan of operations which has filled jails with humble folk --farmers and artisans--suspected of implication in Castillo Armas movement. Arrests of this type reported numerous in Quezaltenango and Escuintla as well as vicinity of capital. Thus government itself is helping destroy myth that all Guatemalans except handful of reactionaries support it.

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Official police bulletin describing events at El Durazno makes no effort minimize gravity of event. It says police had discovered names of four individuals there who were to act as military units when insurrection started and sent mall squad headed by Assistant Chief of Police at Amatitlan arrest them night of June 9. When police called at their ses, inhabitants gave cries of alarm and more than forty set upon police with machetes, killing Assistant Chief and one other and severely wounding a third. Police promptly sent reinforcements and in resulting struggle with "insurrectionists" two of latter were killed. Next day further skirmish took place in which three more peasants were killed.

According to unofficial version, peasants killed on June 10 were shot in cold blood by police "while attempting escape" in retaliation for deaths of the two policemen.

Eleven persons who had taken asylum in Salvadoran Embassy left Guatemala June 12 under safe conduct.

While government took firm action against plotters, Communists mobilized their extensive aparatua to support Arbenz. Pro-government press carried constant stream of messages from local mass organizations and unions pledging aid and many from foreign organizations, presumably Communist influenced, offering moral support.

Joint CGTG-CNCG declaration previously mentioned was part of this campaign, but its unusual frankness was seized upon by anti-government individuals as evidence of weakness. Earlier in week, CNCG had issued statement designed allay apprehensions caused by its circular instruction of June 4 (EMBTEL 903). Statement said there was no question of peasants replacing army, much less of their forming another army within nation, and reiterated that in any emergency thousands of peasants and workers would place themselves under army orders.

It is doubtful this statement proved reassuring and army is still believed generally opposed to arming civilians despite pressure from Arbenz and from pro-Communist groups who are begging for "military instruction". This issue between Arbenz and army is dangerous chink in government armor.

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NOTE: Advance copy to Mr. Leddy (ARA) 12:30 p.m. 6/14/54 NPL